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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 180130

FOLLOWING REPEAT MOSCOW 16271 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ADDIS ABABA AMMAN BAGHDAD BEIRUT CAIRO DAMASCUS JIDDA LONDON MOGADISCIO MUSCAT PARIS SANA SINAI TEHRAN TEL AVIV TRIPOLI USUN NEW YORK DIA WASHDC JULY 12.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 16271

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PEPR, UR, YS, YE, ET
SUBJECT: LESSENED SOVIET CONCERN OVER DANGER OF EXTERNAL ATTACK ON PDRY

REF: MOSCOW 15863

SUMMARY: CONTENT OF RECENT SOVIET MEDIA ARTICLES ON SITUATION IN SOUTHERN ARABIAN PENINSULA AND OF CONVERSATION WITH MFA N.E. COUNTRIES DEPT. FIRST SECRETARY LEONID MIKHAYLOVICH ZEMSKIY (SUDANESE DESK OFFICER SUBSTITUTING FOR ABSENT YEMENS DESK OFFICER MILIKHOV) INDICATE LESSENED SOVIET CONCERN OVER POSSIBILITY OF EXTERNAL MILITARY PRESSURE ON PDRY. END SUMMARY.

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1. SOVIET MEDIA, WHILE CONTINUING TO PAINT DAILY ARTICLES ON ALLEGED "IMPERIALIST AND REACTIONARY" INVOLVEMENT IN GASHMI ASSASSINATION AND SUBSEQUENT POLITICAL EVENTS WITH REGARD TO PDRY, HAVE BACKED AWAY FROM PREVIOUS WARNINGS OF POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE FROM PDRY'S "FRIENDS" SHOULD OUTSIDE FORCES ENTER THE INTER-YEMENI CONFLICT.

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2. DURING JULY 12 CONVERSATION BETWEEN EMBOFF AND ACTING YEMENI DESK OFFICER ZEMSKIY, LATTER STATED THAT HE FELT THAT TENSE SITUATION BETWEEN TWO YEMENS HAD EASED, "AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT." THIS HE ATTRIBUTED TO SOUTH YEMENI NATIONAL SOLIDARITY BEHIND NEW PDRY LEADERS AND TO SINCERE INTEREST OF THOSE LEADERS IN SOLVING PROBLEMS WITH YAR BY PEACEFUL AND NOT BY MILITARY MEANS. PRESSED TO DESCRIBE WHAT SOVIET UNION HAD DONE TO DECREASE TENSION BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES WITH WHICH IT HAD GOOD RELATIONS, ZEMSKIY WOULD ONLY ADMIT THAT YAR AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN REASSURED "BY THE MFA" THAT SOVIET UNION REGRETTED GASHMI ASSASSINATION, WANTED TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH YAR "AS BEFORE," AND FELT THAT OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING IN REGION WOULD BENEFIT NO ONE.

3. IN FURTHER REMARKS, HOWEVER, ZEMSKIY OFFERED TYPICAL SOVIET "WHO BENEFITS?" FORMULA AS LEADING TO CONCLUSION THAT SAUDI ARABIA AND U.S. BENEFITTED FROM RECENT TURN OF EVENTS IN TWO YEMENS. IT WAS NOT ACCIDENTAL, HE NOTED OMINOUSLY, THAT EVENTS BEGAN JUST ON EVE OF TWINAM MISSION TO PDRY. HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, OFFER A STRONG REBUTTAL TO EMB-OFF'S CONCLUSION THAT, USING SAME "LOGIC," CONFIDENTIAL

CASE COULD BE MADE THAT SOVIET UNION HAD BENEFITTED FROM CHANGED SITUATION ESPECIALLY IN PDRY. ZEMSKIY REFUSED TO COMMENT ON POSSIBILITY OF MOSCOW SIGNING FORMAL AGREEMENT WITH PDRY FOR USE OF PORT OF ADEN, AND ALSO REFUSED TO TALK ABOUT RECENT SOVIET-PDRY POLITICAL CONTACTS. HE DID DENY ANY SOVIET "NEED" TO INCREASE SOVIET/CUBAN PRESENCE IN PDRY. HE DISCOUNTED PRESENT SIGNIFICANCE OF PEOPLES FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF OMAN. AFTER DISCLAIMER THAT HORN OF AFRICA MATTERS WERE IN JURISDICTION OF THIRD AFRICAN DEPT., ZEMSKIY WENT ON AT SOME LENGTH ABOUT "ONLY SOLUTION" FOR ERITREANS BEING ACCEPTANCE OF SOME SORT OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF ETHIOPIAN STATE.

4. A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT LINE WAS GIVEN EMBOFF ON JULY 10 BY YAR DCM ABDULWAHAB JAHAF. JAHAF DENIED SOVIET REPORTS OF TROOP CONCENTRATIONS ALONG PDRY BORDER AND ADDED THAT, IN GENERAL, HE DID NOT SEE THE GROUNDS FOR THE PDRY AND SOVIET WARNINGS WHICH HAD BEEN REPORTED IN SOVIET MEDIA. HE FELT THAT THIS SOVIET "OVER REACTION" MIGHT HAVE BEEN

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CAUSED BY SOVIET CONCERN LEST ANY OUTSIDE PRESSURES OR EVENTS NEGATIVELY INFLUENCE THE EXTREMELY UNSTABLE POLITICAL SITUATION INSIDE PDRY. AS EVIDENCE OF THIS INSTABILITY, HE TOLD EMBOFF OF THREE PDRY PILOTS WHO HAD RECENTLY DEFECTED (WITH PLANES) TO YAR. EMBOFF SUGGESTED THAT, TO EASE CURRENT "PRESSURE" ON PDRY, SOVIETS MIGHT NOW TRY TO BE MORE COOPERATIVE THAN USUAL WITH REGARD TO SOVIET ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO YAR. JAHAF WAS UNWILLING TO GO INTO DETAIL, BUT ADMITTED THAT MOSCOW HAD ADOPTED SUCH A LINE. HE REFUSED TO BE MORE SPECIFIC THAN THIS.

5. COMMENT: WE DO NOT ATTACH GREAT SIGNIFICANCE
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TO ZEMSKIY'S COMMENTS, BUT BELIEVE THEY ARE WORTH REPORTING DUE TO PAUCITY OF INFORMATION ON SOVIET ANGLE IN PRESENT YEMENI SITUATION. CONVERSATION ENDED AMICABLY WITH ZEMSKIY'S APPARENTLY SINCERE AGREEMENT THAT ALL OF FACTS OF RECENT EVENTS IN TWO YEMENS ARE NOT YET KNOWN BY EITHER AMERICANS OR SOVIETS.

6. JAHAF'S POSITIVE RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S SUGGESTION OF POSSIBLE FRIENDLY GESTURES TO YAR ON PART OF SOVIET UNION CARRIED IMPLICATION THAT SOME SORT OF CONCRETE OVERTURE HAD BEEN MADE BY SOVIET SIDE DURING PAST TWO WEEKS. ZEMSKIY, WHEN PRESENTED WITH SAME HYPOTHESIS, WOULD ONLY CITE SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE ONGOING SOVIET-YAR COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS. MATLOCK UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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